PHH 3600 Contemporary Philosophy

University of Central Florida

College of Arts and Humanities

Department of Philosophy

Spring 2023

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*Office Hours* MF 2pm—3pm or by appointment

Course Description

This is a survey of contemporary analytic philosophy. We will begin with a whirlwind tour of the analytic tradition’s early history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Then we will discuss some of the most influential works of the 20th and early 21st century in metaethics, applied ethics, feminist philosophy, metaphysics, and the philosophy of mind. Figures to be read and discussed include Sidgwick, Frege, Moore, Russell, Ayer, Hempel, Smart, Gettier, Kripke, Thomson, Singer, Fricker, and Haslanger.

Texts

There are no required textbooks for this course. All readings will be provided electronically.

Assessment

* Participation (15%)

Active participation is essential to your success in this course. Please speak up during class as often as you can. Here are some ways to do that: respond to a question, raise an objection, follow-up on another student’s comment, or ask a simple clarification question (ex. “Can you explain X again?” or “What does X mean?”)

* 1 Test (20%)

There will be an in-class exam covering the history of early analytic philosophy composed of multiple-choice, short answer, and short essay questions. I will provide more information about format and content a week beforehand.

* 3 Argument Analysis Papers (35% total)

Three very short argument analysis papers on the topics listed below. The first paper is worth 5%, the second is worth 10%, and the third is worth 20%. Specific instructions for each paper will be distributed roughly two weeks in advance.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Article | Maximum Length | Percentage | Due Date |
| Paper #1 | Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion” | 2 pp.,double-spaced | 5% | Monday, 3/6 |
| Paper #2 | Russell, “Universals” | 2 pp.,double-spaced | 10% | Monday, 3/27 |
| Paper #3 | Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia” | 3 pp.,double-spaced | 15% | Friday, 4/21 |

* Final Paper (30%)

A final term paper, between 10—12 pp. in length. Specific details, including potential paper topics and writing advice, will be provided sometime before spring break.

Attendance Policy

Each student is allotted **four** penalty-free absences throughout the semester, which you can take whenever you want, for whatever reason, and without notifying me ahead of time. However, every subsequent unexcused absence will adversely affect your final course grade. The fourth unexcused absence lowers your grade by one-third of a letter grade (ex. an A becomes an A-), the fifth unexcused lower yours grade by two-thirds (ex. an A becomes a B+), and so on.

Accessibility Policy

I am committed to providing accommodations to students with disabilities. If you are eligible for accommodations, please contact UCF’s Student Accessibility Services by phone at (407) 823-2371, by email at [sas@ucf.edu](mailto:sas@ucf.edu), or in Ferrell Commons 185. Through Student Accessibility Services, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential access and accommodations that might be reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student.

Academic Integrity Statement

Academic misconduct of any sort will not be tolerated. Please familiarize yourself with Section I of UCF’s Rules of Conduct. Here is the University’s description of the potential consequences of academic misconduct: “Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an “F” letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a “Z” designation on one’s transcript. Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.”

Schedule of Readings[[1]](#footnote-1)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 1/9 | Wednesday 1/11 | Friday 1/13 |
| Topic | **Introduction** | **Skepticism** | **Skepticism** |
| Reading | N/A | Descartes, *Meditation* I | Descartes, *Meditation* II |

Week 1: Early Analytic Philosophy

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 1/16 | Wednesday 1/18 | Friday 1/20 |
| Topic | No class—MLK Day | **British Idealism** | **Common Sense I** |
| Reading | N/A | Bradley, *Appearance & Reality* XIV pp. 144—6 | Moore, “Proof of an External World” |

Week 2: Early Analytic Philosophy

Week 3: Early Analytic Philosophy

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 1/23 | Wednesday 1/25 | Friday 1/27 |
| Topic | **Common Sense I** | **Common Sense II** | **Analysis** |
| Reading | Moore, “Proof of an External World” | Moore, “A Defense of Common Sense” | Russell, “On Denoting” |

Week 4: Early Analytic Philosophy

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 1/30 | Wednesday 2/1 | Friday 2/3 |
| Topic | **Analysis** | **Analysis** | **Russell on Knowledge** |
| Reading | Russell, “On Denoting” | Russell, “On Denoting” | Russell, “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description” |

Week 5: Early Analytic Philosophy

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 2/6 | Wednesday 2/8 | Friday 2/10 |
| Topic | **Russell on Knowledge** | **Logical Positivism** | **Logical Positivism** |
| Reading | Russell, “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description” | Ayer, “The Elimination of Metaphysics” | Ayer, “The Elimination of Metaphysics” |

Week 6: Contemporary Metaethics

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 2/13 | Wednesday 2/15 | Friday 2/17 |
| Topic | **Test—Early Analytic Phil** | **Non-Naturalist Moral Realism** | **Moral Error Theory** |
| Reading | N/A | Moore, “Irreducible Ethical Truths” | Mackie, “The Subjectivity of Value” |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 2/20 | Wednesday 2/22 | Friday 2/24 |
| Topic | **Moral Error Theory** | **Virtue Ethics** | **Virtue Ethics** |
| Reading | Mackie, “The Subjectivity of Value” | Anscombe, “Modern Moral Philosophy” | Anscombe, “Modern Moral Philosophy” |

Week 7: Contemporary Ethics

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 2/27 | Wednesday 3/1 | Friday 3/3 |
| Topic | **Virtue Ethics** | **Virtue Ethics** | **Virtue Ethics** |
| Reading | Stocker, “The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories” | Stocker, “The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories” | Stocker, “The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories” |

Week 8: Contemporary Ethics

Week 9: Contemporary Applied Ethics

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 3/6 | Wednesday 3/8 | Friday 3/10 |
| Topic | **Abortion** | **Abortion** | **Abortion** |
| Reading | Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion” | Thomson, “A Defense of Abortion” | Marquis, “Why Abortion is Immoral” |
| Paper Due | Analysis Paper #1 | N/A | N/A |

Week 10: Spring Break

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 3/13 | Wednesday 3/15 | Friday 3/17 |
| Topic | No class—Spring Break | No class—Spring Break | No class—Spring Break |
| Reading | No class—Spring Break | No class—Spring Break | No class—Spring Break |

Week 11: Contemporary Feminist Philosophy

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 3/20 | Wednesday 3/22 | Friday 3/24 |
| Topic | **Social Construction** | **Social Construction** | **Gender Identity** |
| Reading | Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” | Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?” | Jenkins, “Amelioration and Inclusion” |

Week 12: Contemporary Metaphysics

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 3/27 | Wednesday 3/29 | Friday 3/31 |
| Topic | **Realism** | **Nominalism** | **Necessity** |
| Reading | Russell, “Universals” | Quine, “On What There Is” | Kripke, *Naming & Necessity* I |
| Paper Due | Argument Analysis #2 | N/A | N/A |

Week 13: Contemporary Metaphysics

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 4/3 | Wednesday 4/5 | Friday 4/7 |
| Topic | **Necessity** | **Necessity** | **Possible Worlds** |
| Reading | Kripke, *Naming & Necessity* II | Kripke, *Naming & Necessity* II | Van Inwagen, “The Modal Ontological Argument” |

Week 14: Contemporary Metaphysics

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 4/10 | Wednesday 4/12 | Friday 4/14 |
| Topic | **Possible Worlds** | **Possible Worlds** | **Possible Worlds** |
| Reading | Van Inwagen, “The Modal Ontological Argument” | Lewis, “A Philosophers’ Paradise” | Lewis, “A Philosophers’ Paradise” |

Week 15: Contemporary Philosophy of Mind

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 4/17 | Wednesday 4/19 | Friday 4/21 |
| Topic | **Physicalism** | **Physicalism** | **Property Dualism** |
| Reading | Smart, “Sensations and Brain Processes” | Smart, “Sensations and Brain Processes” | Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia” |
| Paper Due | N/A | N/A | Argument Analysis #3 |

Week 16: Contemporary Philosophy of Mind

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Monday 4/24 | Wednesday 4/26 | Friday 4/28 |
| Topic | **Property Dualism** | N/A | N/A |
| Reading | Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia” | N/A | N/A |

1. Note: this schedule is **tentative**. It is subject to change based on student needs, instructor illness, and/or COVID-19 related disruptions. I will distribute an updated schedule if such scheduling changes occur. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)